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2 **CLAIMS**

3 1. A computer readable medium encoded with a data structure,
4 comprising:

5 a parameter definition for at least one expected input parameter; and
6 an instruction-based mechanism that is operative to identify information
7 within an input source for each of the expected input parameters based on the
8 respective definition for the expected input parameter and to populate the expected
9 input parameter with the information when the data structure becomes instantiated
10 into an object.

11 2. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the input source
12 comprises a string.

13 3. The computer readable medium of claim 2, wherein the string
14 comprises a part of a script.

15 4. The computer readable medium of claim 2, wherein the string
16 comprises a part of a command string entered on a command line.
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1 5. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the parameter
2 definition comprises a data type and a name for the expected input parameter.

3 6. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the information
4 comprises a value.

5 7. The computer readable medium of claim 6, wherein the parameter
6 definition comprises a data type and a name for the expected input parameter, and
7 wherein the mechanism further coerces the value into a converted value having the
8 data type specified in the definition.

9 8. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the input source
10 comprises a set of objects.

11 9. The computer readable medium of claim 8, wherein the set of objects
12 comprise .NET objects.

13 10. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the input source
14 comprises a precisely parseable stream.

15 11. The computer readable medium of claim 10, wherein the precisely
16 parseable stream comprises an XML-based document.

17 12. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the mechanism
18 further identifies and populates each expected input parameter for each record
19 within the input source.

20 13. The computer readable medium of claim 1, further comprising a
21 mapping mechanism that is operative to associate a mapped name with the
22 expected input parameter, wherein identifying the information is based on the
23 mapped name.

24 14. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the mechanism
25 comprises a method inherited from a class provided within a runtime environment.

1 **15.** The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the parameter
2 definition comprises a direct specification within the data structure.

3 **16.** The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the direct
4 specification comprises a parameter declaration.

5 **17.** The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the parameter
6 definition comprises an indirect specification associated with the data structure.

7 **18.** The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein the indirect
8 specification comprises a reference to an XML-based document that defines the at
9 least one expected input parameter.

10 **19.** A computer-executable method for populating parameters declared
11 within a data structure, the method comprising:

12 obtaining an expected name for a parameter, the expected name being
13 assigned in a declaration for the parameter within a data structure;

14 identifying a label within an input source correlating to the expected name;

15 retrieving a value associated with the label; and

16 assigning the value to the parameter
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1 **20.** The method of claim 19, wherein the expected name and the label
2 are identical.

3 **21.** The method of claim 19, further comprising providing mapping
4 information that defines an alias name for the expected name and identifying the
5 label based on the alias name.

6 **22.** The method of claim 21, wherein the input source comprises a
7 command string entered on a command line and the alias name is provided within
8 the command string.

9 **23.** The method of claim 21, wherein the alias name is provided within a
10 data store.

11 **24.** The method of claim 19, wherein the input source comprises an
12 XML document.

13 **25.** The method of claim 19, wherein the input source comprises a
14 database table.

15 **26.** The method of claim 19, wherein the input source comprises a
16 command string entered on a command line.

17 **27.** The method of claim 19, wherein the input source comprises a
18 script.

19 **28.** A system the handles input parameters, the system comprising:
20 a means for processing; and
21 a memory means, the memory means being allocated for a plurality of
22 computer-executable instructions which are loaded into the memory means for
23 execution by the means for processing, the computer-executable instructions
24 performing a method comprising:
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1 a means for obtaining an expected name for a parameter, the expected name
2 being assigned in a declaration for the parameter within a data structure;
3 a means for identifying a label within an input source correlating to the
4 expected name;
5 a means for retrieving a value associated with the label; and
6 a means for assigning the value to the parameter.